(b) whether it is also a fact that the loans from banks for development of agriculture have decreased and maximum rural branches have been closed by the banks;

(c) whether Government is formulating any effective scheme to improve the condition of farmers; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) No such report has been received by the Government. With a view to mitigating the distress of farmers, Government announced a Rehabilitation Package in 2006 for the farmers in the the identified 31 distress districts of Andhra Pradesh (16), Karnataka (6), Kerala (3) and Maharashtra (6), where maximum suicides by farmers were reported. Achievement under credit components of the rehabilitation package which aims to mitigate distress of farmers due to indebtedness is given below:

(i) The overdue loans of the farmers in these 31 districts as on 01 July 2006 has been reschedule over a period of 3-5 years with a one year moratorium.

(ii) The entire interest on overdue loans amounting to Rs. 3728.37 crore as on 01 July 2006 have been waived off in the 31 identified distressed districts. Farmers with no past interest burden as on that date became eligible for fresh loans from the banking system.

(iii) The credit flow target in 31 identified distressed districts for the year 2006-07 was fixed at Rs. 21,422.44 crore and the achievement was Rs. 19,927.42 crore. For the year 2007-08, the credit flow target has been fixed at Rs. 23,402.71 crore.

(b) No, Sir. Ground level credit disbursement by all agencies for agriculture has increased from Rs. 1,25,309 crore during 2004-05 to Rs. 1,80,486 crore during 2005-06 and further increased to Rs. 2,29,400 crore in 2006-07. Agency-wise details of achievement during the last three years are given below:

(Rs. in crore)

Agency	Amount of loans disbursed		
	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Cooperative Banks	31,424	39,786	42,480
RRBs	12,404	15,223	20,435
Commercial Banks	81,481	1,25,477	1,66,485
Total	125,309	1,80,486	2,29,400

(c) and (d) A scheme of debt waiver and debt relief for farmers has been announced by the Government in the Union Budget for 2008-09. Under the Scheme, total value of overdue loans being waived is estimated at Rs.50,000 crore and the one time settlement (OTS) relief on the overdue loans is estimated at Rs. 10,000 crore.

GDP spending on medical services

†*238. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) whether it is a fact that a decision to spend 3 per cent of gross domestic production (GDP) on medical services in the country was taken;

(b) if so, when the decision was taken;

(c) what percentage of GDP has been spent on medical services during 2007-08; and

(d) until when the amount as per the above decision is likely to be spent on medical sector?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMDOSS): (a) to (d) Under the National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP) of the Government, health care is one of the seven thrust areas. The NCMP released in May, 2004, mandates that public spending will be raised to at least 2-3% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) over the next five years with focus on primary health care. Presently, public spending on health as % of GDP is in the vicinity of one percent. However, according to the Economic Survey 2007-08, public spending on health inclusive of social determinants like drinking water and nutrition is 1.39% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the year 2007-08.

During the Eleventh Plan (2007-12), emphasis will be given to access to clean drinking water, sanitation, diet, hygiene and feeding practices and the public spending on health is proposed to be raised to at least 2% of GDP.

National Agriculture Biosecurity System

*239. PROF. M.S. SWAMINATHAN:
MS. MABEL REBELLO:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the proactive steps being taken to build an effective national agricultural biosecurity system, in the context of the second outbreak of Avian Influenza (H5N1 strain) in the country;

(b) whether Government has examined the detailed recommendations given by the National Commission on Farmers (NCF) in their 4th Report submitted in April, 2006, on building a National agricultural biosecurity system; and

(c) if so, what action has been taken, so far, to implement the NCF recommendations designed to insulate our country from the ravages of trans-boundary pests and diseases?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (c) Government of India has an elaborate system of agricultural bio-security enforced through its Plant and Animal Quarantine organizations. In fact, an effective nation wide surveillance, early warning, testing, culling a capacity building in handling poultry and migratory birds have been undertaken to control the outbreak of Avian Influenza recently. However, bio-security is a dynamic subject with new challenges. Therefore, in order to strengthen the bio-security system further, in the National Policy for Farmers, 2007 approved by the Government of India, the recommendations on agricultural bio-security made by the National Commission on Farmers were suitably incorporated. This policy has approved the establishment of an Integrated National Agricultural Bio-security System (NABS) covering crops, animal husbandry, fisheries, forestry and agriculturally relevant micro-organisms, with the objectives, *inter-alia,* to safeguard the income and livelihood security of farmer families and enhance national and local capacity in initiating proactive measures in monitoring and early warning, education and international cooperation. The policy includes further strengthening of